

Marquette man arraigned on waterfowl and illegal chartering charges

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Agency: Natural Resources

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Michigan Department of Natural Resources conservation officers announced today a Marquette man has been arraigned in two counties on a total of 26 charges related to alleged waterfowl and charter operation violations.

Terry Jay Wilson, 30, of Marquette was arraigned Jan. 25 in Arenac County District Court in Standish. Wilson waived arraignment in Mackinac County District Court in St. Ignace on additional charges.

The charges from both counties were the result of a 2-year undercover investigation by detectives from the Michigan DNR Law Enforcement Division's Special Investigations Unit.

The 26 counts – 17 from Arenac County and 9 from Mackinac County – ranged from operating an unlicensed and uninspected charter boat, to hunting waterfowl from a boat under power and exceeding waterfowl bag limits.

Pretrial conference dates are scheduled for March 9 in Mackinac County and March 21 in Arenac County.

Detectives initiated their investigation based on allegations of illegal waterfowl hunting and guiding.

On multiple occasions during the course of the investigation, Wilson operated a waterfowl hunting charter on Great Lakes waters for a fee. Conservation officers said the charters were operated in Saginaw Bay and St. Martins Bay in Lake Huron.

At times, those operations were allegedly conducted during hazardous conditions including waves over 7 feet high and sub-freezing temperatures.

Conservation officers said Wilson shot waterfowl while the vessel was under power and he allegedly encouraged clients to do the same. Wilson allegedly further encouraged clients to harvest waterfowl in excess of legal bag limits.

Arrest warrants were served on Wilson at his home in Marquette. A search warrant was also served at a residence near Munising which resulted in the seizure of a 25-foot Duckwater boat. Conservation officers said they documented the vessel had been used in the commission of the alleged crimes.

If convicted on all charges, Wilson could face a maximum punishment of over \$20,000 in fines and reimbursement, hunting license revocation, one year in jail and condemnation of the boat.

Mackinac County set a personal recognizance bond for Wilson and Arenac County set a bond Wilson would have been required to post at the time of his arraignment. He is currently free pending his next court appearance.

"This case exemplifies the natural resource and public safety issues that conservation officers are out there to handle," said Lt. Jason Haines, supervisor of the DNR's Special Investigations Unit. "We do this in an effort to protect Michigan's wildlife resources as well as the safety of the public wishing to utilize them."

Anyone with information regarding the illegal take of any Michigan fish and wildlife or the illegal operation of unlicensed charters is encouraged to call the DNR's Report All Poaching hotline at 9/20/2016 3:37 PM

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Michigan's DNR conservation officers are fully-commissioned state peace officers who provide natural resources protection, ensure recreational safety and protect citizens by providing general law enforcement duties and lifesaving operations in the communities they serve. Learn more about Michigan conservation officers at www.michigan.gov/conservationofficers.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations. For more information, go to www.michigan.gov/dnr.